

**Poetry Unit**  
Anticipated Schedule

Date	Assignment
<b>Week of April 10-14</b>	
Monday	Intro to poetry and music lyric day
Tuesday	Petrarchan and Shakespearean Sonnets
Wednesday	"Forgetfulness" and "You Will Forget Me"
Thursday	Latino/a Poets—"After 'Joaquin'" and "Lighter,"
Friday	Reading Day
<b>Week of April 17-21</b>	
Monday	"The Boiling Water"
Tuesday	Poetry Speed Dating
Wednesday	"My Papa's Waltz" (Science Field trip)
Thursday	"Cinderella"
Friday	Haiku Day
<b>Week of April 24-28</b>	
Monday	"We Wear the Mask" and "Ballad of Birmingham"
Tuesday	<a href="#"><u>blackpoetsspeakout</u></a>
Wednesday	Afghan Women's Writing Project—"What I Know" and "Gun or Pen"
Thursday	Poem in Your Pocket Day and Subbie Visit Day
Friday	Reading Day
<b>Week of May 2-6</b>	
Monday	Work Day
Tuesday	Work Day
Wednesday	Work Day
Thursday	Work Day
Friday	Essay due by 10pm on Monday May 8

## **Poetry Unit--Graded Assignments**

### **Haiku Tumblr (10 points)**

*The New York Times* has designed an algorithm that generates haikus from their publications. We are going to take a crack at it--not the algorithm part--but we will generate our own haikus from newspapers. Your grade will be based on your searching skills and accurate completion of the assignment (did you follow the requirements for a haiku).

### **Poetry Speed Dating (10 points)**

That's right—poetry speed dating. During class, I will direct you to a few poetry websites. You will have a designated amount of time to choose a poem and respond to it.

### **Poem in Your Pocket (10 points)**

April is National Poetry Month which means that Poem in Your Pocket Day will be April 21st this year. It's pretty straightforward--choose a poem, write it down, and carry it in your pocket all day long. Share it with your friends, families, teachers, and anyone else who might listen. During class, you will be required to share it with us. Your grade will be determined by the completion of the assignment.

### **Black Poets Speak Out (30 points)**

After the death of Michael Brown, a group of individuals organized the [blackpoetsspeakout](#) tumblr site. The site houses a collection of videos of people reading poetry that expresses their feelings and emotions associated with this and similar events. The performances have been taped at various locations and range from poets reading their own poetry, people reading someone else's poetry, and people performing spoken word.

Your task will be to view three assigned videos and then respond to them. You will also be responsible for choosing, viewing, and responding to two other performances. I will give you a worksheet that will guide you through the assignment. Your grade will be determined by the completion of the assignment and the quality of your responses.

### **Poetry Essay (100 points)**

Toward the end of the poetry unit, you will write an essay that demonstrates your ability to think critically and analyze a single poem (that we've read this semester) using the literary terms that we will discuss throughout the unit. I have scheduled works days in class, but you will also be expected to work on the essay outside of class.

Forgetfulness  
Billy Collins

The name of the author is the first to go  
followed obediently by the title, the plot,  
the heartbreaking conclusion, the entire novel  
which suddenly becomes one you have never read, never even heard of,

as if, one by one, the memories you used to harbor  
decided to retire to the southern hemisphere of the brain,  
to a little fishing village where there are no phones.

Long ago you kissed the names of the nine muses goodbye  
and watched the quadratic equation pack its bag,  
and even now as you memorize the order of the planets,

something else is slipping away, a state flower perhaps,  
the address of an uncle, the capital of Paraguay.

Whatever it is you are struggling to remember,  
it is not poised on the tip of your tongue  
or even lurking in some obscure corner of your spleen.

It has floated away down a dark mythological river  
whose name begins with an L as far as you can recall

well on your own way to oblivion where you will join those  
who have even forgotten how to swim and how to ride a bicycle.

No wonder you rise in the middle of the night  
to look up the date of a famous battle in a book on war.  
No wonder the moon in the window seems to have drifted  
out of a love poem that you used to know by heart.

Collins, Billy. "Forgetfulness." Poetry Foundation, [www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/37695](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/37695).

You Will Forget Me  
Ella Wheeler Wilcox

You will forget me. The years are so tender,  
They bind up the wounds which we think are so deep,  
This dream of our youth will fade out as the splendour  
Fades from the skies when the sun sinks to sleep,  
The cloud of forgetfulness, over and over  
Will banish the last rosy colours away,  
And the fingers of time will weave garlands to cover  
The scar which you think is a life-mark today.

You will forget me. The one boon you covet  
Now above all things will soon seem no prize,  
And the heart, which you hold not in keeping to prove it  
True or untrue, will lose worth in your eyes.  
The one drop to-day, that you deem only wanting  
To fill your life-cup to the brim, soon will seem  
But a valueless mite; and the ghost that is haunting  
The aisles of your heart will pass out with the dream.

You will forget me, will thank me for saying  
The words which you think are so pointed with pain.  
Time loves a new lay, and the dirge he is playing  
Will change for you soon to a livelier strain.  
I shall pass from your life, I shall pass out forever,  
And these hours we have spent will be sunk in the past.  
Youth buries its dead, grief kills seldom or never  
And forgetfulness covers all sorrows at last.

Wilcox, Ella Wheeler. "You Will Forget Me." Poem Hunter,  
[www.poemhunter.com/poem/you-will-forget-me/](http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/you-will-forget-me/).

# Albino Carrillo

After "Joaquin"

*for Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzales*

Trapped in the morning twilight  
Just before sunrise-I begin  
My day thinking how  
My ancestors brought me  
Out here to live past  
The great millennium  
Along the Miami River. Yes,  
There was a time I lived  
In the desert with my brother,  
And I walked old roads to get to the drug store-  
I smoked Marlboro 100's, I wore the cowboy boots  
And Wranglers my mother  
Bought for us at Trade Mart.  
The next year, I joined the gringos  
For a while and dated scientists'  
Daughters even as I drove  
My old troca to the elementary  
School where summers I cut  
Weeds, washed walls and toilets  
To get extra money. You'd think  
This was the truth, Joaquin-

That in your time or mine  
A man could only make a living  
With his back. All the guys  
I worked with were Mexicans  
Like me. I'd switched to Viceroy  
Kings and liked to drive late  
At night up into the mountains  
To ignite my dreams. My days of hauling trash cans ended-  
I never had a job inside,  
Working retail or sitting easy at the pool. So Joaquin,  
Aztec prince, Spanish horseman,  
I went to college with my janitor's  
Money. The first semester  
I read Marx I read Fanon.

I saw the comings and goings of my kind, my tribe

And they have mostly forgotten  
You. Or if they did remember  
Your glorious past, it was only  
Because some of your words  
Survived as graffiti in old  
Stacks of paper my father kept.  
Out here in the great, blonde Midwest,  
I became war-loving Huitzilopochtli and could only  
Choke back tears when I felt  
Alone. Out here on the edge  
Of the great empire, I live with my  
Coyote children and know how you felt  
Finding another part of yourself of myself  
That was mezclada, like  
My dark-skinned daughter  
And deer-eyed son  
Who I have given a Mexican name  
To carry into his life in America. This morning

I saw the masons  
Putting in stone and pouring  
Sidewalks where I work-  
Some of the men,  
From Defe or Puebla,  
Listened to Banda on an old  
Radio. Joaquin, until I see the big picture,  
I insist on your demanding  
Presence in every orchard I sit in, every luncheon  
Where I break bread  
With people who can't  
Pronounce my name or yours.

Canillo, Albino. "After Joaquin". Poetry Society of America,  
[www.poetrysociety.org/psa/poetry/crossroads/forth-coming/x/](http://www.poetrysociety.org/psa/poetry/crossroads/forth-coming/x/).

## Blas Falconer

### Lighter,

the word that comes to mind after many nights.  
As when a plane descends over a city  
you call home, the body's rise against the belt  
strung across your lap. Darkness and lampposts,  
like gold and silver beads below, falling  
into them. Or better yet, wading in  
the bioluminescent bay and each kick  
creates a soft glow, each stroke makes you think  
light could come from the body, and not  
a world disturbed into brilliance. Because  
it captures what I mean—both the weight  
and how you see what you could not. As when  
I heard him cry and lumbered down the hall  
to find you there first, pacing the room, singing  
softly in his ear. Through the window,  
the city sparkled and seemed to have grown  
though, by day, I never see more than  
two or three men working at once, lifting  
together, say, a plank of wood. Years ago,  
my mother sat beside my bed, eager to bear  
the fever with me. We pass him back  
and forth between us until it breaks,  
and I no longer want what I wanted  
before. As when one day you look upon  
the house you've built and can't recall the field.

Falconer, Blas. "Lighter" Poetry Society of America, [www.poetrysociety.org/poa/poetry/crossroads/forthcoming/blas-falconer/](http://www.poetrysociety.org/poa/poetry/crossroads/forthcoming/blas-falconer/).

The Boiling Water  
Kenneth Koch

A serious moment for the water is  
when it boils  
And though one usually regards it  
merely as a convenience  
To have the boiling water  
available for bath or table  
Occasionally there is someone  
around who understands  
The importance of this moment  
for the water—maybe a saint,  
Maybe a poet, maybe a crazy  
man, or just someone  
temporarily disturbed  
With his mind 'floating' in a  
sense, away from his deepest  
Personal concerns to more  
'unreal' things...

A serious moment for the island  
is when its trees  
Begin to give it shade, and  
another is when the ocean  
washes  
Big heavy things against its side.  
One walks around and looks at  
the island  
But not really at it, at what is on  
it, and one thinks,  
It must be serious, even, to be this  
island, at all, here.  
Since it is lying here exposed to  
the whole sea. All its  
Moments might be serious. It is  
serious, in such windy weather,  
to be a sail  
Or an open window, or a feather  
flying in the street...

Seriousness, how often I have  
thought of seriousness  
And how little I have understood  
it, except this: serious is urgent  
And it has to do with change. You  
say to the water,  
It's not necessary to boil now,  
and you turn it off. It stops  
Fidgeting. And starts to cool. You  
put your hand in it



And say, The water isn't serious  
any more. It has the potential,  
However—that urgency to give  
off bubbles, to  
Change itself to steam. And the  
wind,  
When it becomes part of a  
hurricane, blowing up the  
beach  
And the sand dunes can't keep it  
away.  
Fainting is one sign of  
seriousness, crying is another.  
Shuddering all over is another  
one.

A serious moment for the  
telephone is when it rings.  
And a person answers, it is  
Angelica, or is it you.

A serious moment for the fly is  
when its wings  
Are moving, and a serious  
moment for the duck  
Is when it swims, when it first  
touches water, then spreads  
Its smile upon the water...

A serious moment for the match  
is when it burst into flame...

Serious for me that I met you, and  
serious for you  
That you met me, and that we do  
not know  
If we will ever be close to anyone  
again. Serious the recognition  
of the probability  
That we will, although time  
stretches terribly in  
between...

Koch, Kenneth. "The Boiling Water." Poem Hunter, [www.  
poemhunter.com/poem/the-boiling-water/](http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-boiling-water/).

**Theodore Roethke** (1908–1963)

*Theodore Roethke was born in Michigan. Roethke was an influential teacher of poetry at the University of Washington for many years. His father was the owner of a greenhouse, and Roethke's childhood closeness to nature was an important influence on his mature poetry. His periodic nervous breakdowns, the result of bipolar manic-depression, presaged his early death.*

## My Papa's Waltz

The whiskey on your breath  
Could make a small boy dizzy;  
But I hung on like death:  
Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans  
Slid from the kitchen shelf;

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My mother's countenance  
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist  
Was battered on one knuckle;  
At every step you missed  
My right ear scraped a buckle.

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You beat time on my head  
With a palm caked hard by dirt,  
Then waltzed me off to bed  
Still clinging to your shirt.

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—1948

Roethke, Theodore. "My Papa's Waltz " Poetry: An Introduction,  
edited by Michael Meyer, Boston, Bedford, 2007, p. 266

*Anne Sexton lived a tortured life of mental illness and family troubles, becoming the model of the confessional poet. A housewife with two small daughters, she began writing poetry as the result of a program on public television, later taking a workshop from Robert Lowell in which Sylvia Plath was a fellow student. For fifteen years until her suicide, she was a vibrant, exciting presence in American poetry. A controversial biography of Sexton by Diane Wood Middlebrook appeared in 1991.*

## Cinderella

You always read about it:  
the plumber with twelve children  
who wins the Irish Sweepstakes.  
From toilets to riches.  
That story.

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Or the nursemaid,  
some luscious sweet from Denmark  
who captures the oldest son's heart.  
From diapers to Dior.  
That story.

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Or a milkman who serves the wealthy,  
eggs, cream, butter, yogurt, milk,  
the white truck like an ambulance  
who goes into real estate  
and makes a pile.  
From homogenized to martinis at lunch.

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Or the charwoman  
who is on the bus when it cracks up  
and collects enough from the insurance.  
From mops to Bonwit Teller.<sup>o</sup>  
That story.

20

Once  
the wife of a rich man was on her deathbed  
and she said to her daughter Cinderella:  
Be devout. Be good. Then I will smile  
down from heaven in the seam of a cloud.  
The man took another wife who had  
two daughters, pretty enough  
but with hearts like blackjacks.  
Cinderella was their maid.  
She slept on the sooty hearth each night  
and walked around looking like Al Jolson.<sup>o</sup>  
Her father brought presents home from town,  
jewels and gowns for the other women  
but the twig of a tree for Cinderella.  
She planted that twig on her mother's grave  
and it grew to a tree where a white dove sat.  
Whenever she wished for anything the dove  
would drop it like an egg upon the ground.  
The bird is important, my dears, so heed him.

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Next came the ball, as you all know.  
It was a marriage market.  
The prince was looking for a wife.

All but Cinderella were preparing  
and gussying up for the big event. 45  
Cinderella begged to go too.  
Her stepmother threw a dish of lentils  
into the cinders and said: Pick them  
up in an hour and you shall go.  
The white dove brought all his friends; 50  
all the warm wings of the fatherland came,  
and picked up the lentils in a jiffy.  
No, Cinderella, said the stepmother,  
you have no clothes and cannot dance.  
That's the way with stepmothers. 55

Cinderella went to the tree at the grave  
and cried forth like a gospel singer:  
Mama! Mama! My turtledove,  
send me to the prince's ball!  
The bird dropped down a golden dress 60  
and delicate little gold slippers.  
Rather a large package for a simple bird.  
So she went. Which is no surprise.  
Her stepmother and sisters didn't  
recognize her without her cinder face 65  
and the prince took her hand on the spot  
and danced with no other the whole day.

As nightfall came she thought she'd  
better get home. The prince walked her home  
and she disappeared into the pigeon house 70  
and although the prince took an axe and broke  
it open she was gone. Back to her cinders.  
These events repeated themselves for three days.  
However on the third day the prince  
covered the palace steps with cobbler's wax 75  
And Cinderella's gold shoe stuck upon it.  
Now he would find whom the shoe fit  
and find his strange dancing girl for keeps.  
He went to their house and the two sisters  
were delighted because they had lovely feet. 80  
The eldest went into a room to try the slipper on  
but her big toe got in the way so she simply  
sliced it off and put on the slipper.

The prince rode away with her until the white dove told him to look at the blood pouring forth.	85
That is the way with amputations. They don't just heal up like a wish. The other sister cut off her heel but the blood told as blood will.	
The prince was getting tired.	90
He began to feel like a shoe salesman. But he gave it one last try. This time Cinderella fit into the shoe like a love letter into its envelope.	
At the wedding ceremony	95
the two sisters came to curry favor and the white dove pecked their eyes out. Two hollow spots were left like soup spoons.	
Cinderella and the prince	100
lived, they say, happily ever after, like two dolls in a museum case never bothered by diapers or dust, never arguing over the timing of an egg, never telling the same story twice,	105
never getting a middle-aged spread, their darling smiles pasted on for eternity Regular Bobbsey Twins. <sup>o</sup> That story.	

—1970

Sexton, Anne. "Cinderella " Poetry: An Introduction , edited  
by Michael Meyer, Boston, Bedford, 2007, p. 103-106.

*Paul Laurence Dunbar, a native of Dayton, Ohio, was one of the first black poets to make a mark in American literature. Many of his dialect poems reflect a sentimentalized view of life in the South, which he did not know directly. However, he was also capable of powerful expressions of racial protest.*

## We Wear the Mask

We wear the mask that grins and lies,  
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—  
This debt we pay to human guile;  
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,  
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

5

Why should the world be over-wise,  
In counting all our tears and sighs?  
Nay, let them only see us, while  
    We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries  
To thee from tortured souls arise.  
We sing, but oh the clay is vile  
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;  
But let the world dream otherwise,  
    We wear the mask!

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—1896

Dunbar, Paul Laurence. "We Wear the Mask." Poetry: An introduction, edited by Michael Meyer, Boston, Bedford, 2007, p. 203.

*Dudley Randall was the founder of Broadside Press, a black-owned publishing firm that eventually attracted important writers like Gwendolyn Brooks and Don L. Lee. For most of his life a resident of Detroit, Randall spent many years working in that city's library system before taking a similar position at the University of Detroit.*

## Ballad of Birmingham

*(On the Bombing of a Church in  
Birmingham, Alabama, 1963)°*

"Mother dear, may I go downtown  
Instead of out to play,  
And march the streets of Birmingham  
In a Freedom March today?"

"No, baby, no, you may not go, 5  
For the dogs are fierce and wild,  
And clubs and hoses, guns and jail  
Aren't good for a little child."

"But, mother, I won't be alone.  
Other children will go with me, 10  
And march the streets of Birmingham  
To make our country free."

"No, baby, no, you may not go,  
For I fear those guns will fire.  
But you may go to church instead 15  
And sing in the children's choir."

She has combed and brushed her night-dark hair,  
And bathed rose petal sweet,  
And drawn white gloves on her small brown hands,  
And white shoes on her feet. 20

The mother smiled to know her child  
Was in the sacred place,  
But that smile was the last smile  
To come upon her face.

For when she heard the explosion, 25  
Her eyes grew wet and wild.  
She raced through the streets of Birmingham  
Calling for her child.

She clawed through bits of glass and brick,  
Then lifted out a shoe. 30  
"O, here's the shoe my baby wore,  
But, baby, where are you?"

—1969

Birmingham, Alabama, 1963 during the height of the civil rights movement

Randall, Dudley. "Ballad of Birmingham." *Poetry: An Introduction*  
edited by Michael Meyer, Boston, Bedford, 2007, p. 113.

**What I Know**

That Allah is in the heart  
Life is up to worship  
Love is up to honesty  
Manhood is up to bravery

Stability comes from struggle  
Feelings come from faith  
Politeness comes from family  
Parents come from destiny

Talent comes from education  
Education depends on facilities  
Facts depend on power  
Lies depend on opportunity  
Joy depends on the economy  
People depend on society

This is what guides me  
This is what I know.

By Masooda

**Gun or Pen**

A gun, a pen  
Dirty mind, clean heart  
No future, good future:  
You are one, we are millions.

You talk for yourself;  
I talk for millions of girls  
—living here.  
You fear life;  
(you keep a gun).

Your gun is weakness; my pen is strength.  
Your gun hurts people; my pen makes them smile.  
I am proud of life—  
(I keep a pen and books):



You destroy, I build,  
but I am not afraid,  
I am not afraid.  
Life is *beautiful*,  
(things are good)—

*I am alive.*

I have a pen, I write, I talk.  
I see my long life-journey,  
but you see only death, death of your *self*.

*Remember,*  
you can kill me, kill her, kill him,  
but you can never kill us all,  
for you are one—we are millions.

You live in yesterday, I live  
in tomorrow, and the day  
after tomorrow  
and the day  
after that.

By Maryam M.

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